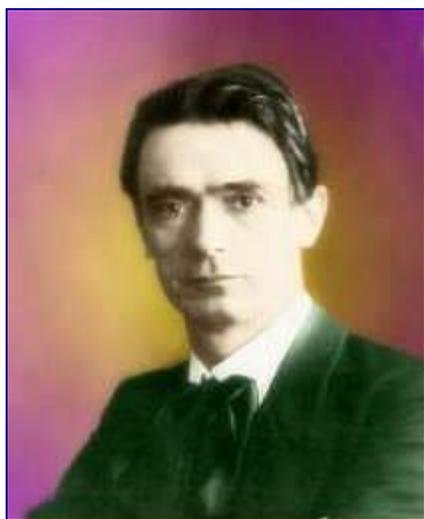


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A READER'S JOURNAL

True and False Paths in Spiritual Investigation, GA# 243

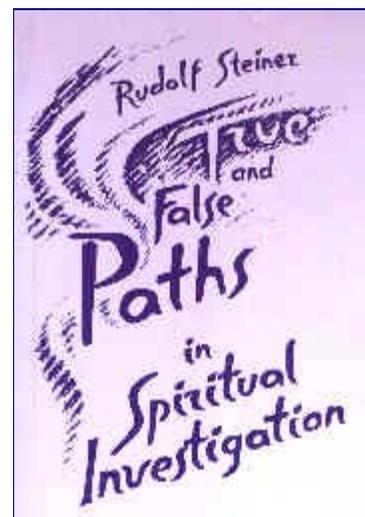
by
Rudolf Steiner

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There are two false paths: the path of materialism and the path of spiritualism. In the former, the material world is considered to be the only reality and all else is illusion; in the latter the spiritual world is considered to be the only reality and all else is illusion. Each of these approaches to reality is like a chariot driver powering his chariot with only one horse. The materialist driver places one horse on the left and moves in counter-clockwise circles. The spiritualist driver places one horse on the right and moves in clockwise circles. Each one is like a dog chasing its own tail. They use up a lot of energy to stay in the same place and make no progress. Only if humanity harnesses two horses to its chariot will any progress be made straight away. The two horses are *materialistic investigation* and *spiritual investigation* -- harnessed in the right way, these two will move forward the chariot of humankind into a future that is worth having.

[page 23] For reality can be apprehended only by the person who is able to reinforce the remarkable discoveries which the natural and historical sciences have added to our stock of knowledge in recent times with insight derived from the spiritual world.

Steiner tells us that the two worlds of the material and the spiritual co-exist side by side and we err seriously if we neglect either side of the equation -- we have no chance of reaching a balance unless we take both sides into account. All of us can be said to have direct knowledge of the material world, but a rather incomplete knowledge of the spiritual world, up until now. And what knowledge is available about the spiritual world is fragmented, confusing, offers itself to multiple interpretations, and engenders approaches to directly experiencing the spiritual world for oneself that are fraught with the possibility for error. If there are true paths and false paths to spiritual investigation, it would be nice to know all about these before we begin our journey. To enlighten us about this is Steiner's stated task in these lectures.

[page 23] I propose to discuss in these lectures how the world in which man lives may be known in its totality, on the one hand through a consideration of his physical environment and, on the other hand, through the perception of the spiritual. In this way I hope to indicate the true and false methods of attaining such knowledge.

What are we to do when the wisest minds of the East tell us that "the world is *maya* (illusion)" and those of the West tell us to "know thyself." Can't they get their act together and agree on just one approach that

would work for everyone? Well, there were teachers in the ancient mystery schools who understood that both aspects were important.

[page 25] But in the ancient Mysteries, too, the quest for truth and reality had its origin in this twofold perception that, in the final analysis, the world is illusion and that man must attain to self-knowledge.

As human beings we are confronted with an enormous paradox as we extensively study the world in which we live. Not when we study minerals in geology, or plants in botany, or animals in zoology — these we can grasp in useful ways with our natural sciences — no paradoxes there. Also — through the sciences of physics, chemistry, astronomy, and astrophysics we are able to examine the world of matter and energy, in microscopic and telescopic realms — no paradoxes there. It is only when we turn our discerning glance to ourselves do we encounter the daunting paradox: there is something in us that is *not* in the other aspects of reality we have discovered, something that doesn't fit tidily into our systematization of observed phenomenon. The paradox is this: we are both the observer and the observed. We become like the dog chasing its tail if we use the same methods of observation that served us so well when we studied the mineral, plant, or animal kingdoms to study ourselves. The one thing that we notice as we study these other kingdoms is their impermanence. Plants usually die in the course of one season, animals rarely live longer than humans, and even mountains wear down over time. We err greatly if we accept that what we observe in the natural world outside of our selves is true for us. (paraphrase from pages 25, 26)

[page 26] Man then comes to the conclusion: I bear within me some quality that is different from anything I see and hear around me. I must arrive at an understanding of my own being, for I cannot find it in anything that I see and hear.

There are five I's in the above quote and that should give you a hint as what this quality is that distinguishes you from anything you see around yourself. It is your innate sense of "I am" that is unique. The limestone strata your house sits on does not have a local sense of "I am" within itself, your rose bush does not have a local sense of "I am" within itself and your domestic animal, cat or dog, does not have a local sense of "I am" within itself. Only you do. Rightly understood, your "I am" is your direct spiritual nature, it is immortal and survives from one lifetime to another. It is an aspect that you cannot observe in the outside world of nature except in another human being.

What are the true paths for observing the spiritual world? Steiner gives us two false paths right off:

1. [page 26, 27] . . . if we harbor vague anticipations, nebulous enthusiasms, unaccountable presentiments from dark corners of the soul, dream-fantasies about the spiritual, it will remain forever unknown to us. We remain in the world of conjecture; we share a belief, but have no real knowledge. If we are content simply to adopt this course, the spiritual will become not better known to us, but progressively more unknown.

2. [page 27] . . . he [man] pursues the same line of enquiry in relation to the spiritual and phenomenal world. And the phenomenal world is found to be illusion. If he pursues the same approach to the spiritual world⁽¹⁾, as the ordinary spiritualists sometimes do, then he is subject to even greater illusions.

Of these two choices, he says pungently, "In the first instance the illusion is magnified, in the second, our ignorance." We must find the true path and avoid these two typical false paths. And we must avoid these false paths if we wish to reduce the effects of illusion and ignorance that would otherwise hinder us greatly.

One can see how the path to a knowledge of the human being for an artist is different today from formerly. An artist today uses a model when endeavoring to create an image of the human body. In the

past artists operated differently than they do today, but knowledge of the difference requires someone who can see into the spiritual world and report it to us as Steiner does so capably. First, he looks at the ancient Greek sculptors and then at Renaissance painters.

[page 29, 30] The Greek artist did not work in this way [using a model]; rather did he sense the spiritual human form within himself. In sculpture, if he wished to portray an arm in movement, he was aware that the external world was informed by a spiritual content, that every material object has been created out of the spirit and in his work he strove to recreate the spirit. Even as late as the Renaissance a painter did not use a model; it served only as a stimulus. He knew intuitively what activated hand or arm and expressed this information in his rendering of movement. Merely to copy the external and superficial aspects of the world of Maya, merely to copy the model, does not advance our understanding; we do not see thereby more deeply into man, but are concerned only with externals and so remain a spectator outside him.

The key point Steiner is making is that if you "remain within the world of Maya," you cannot become a true artist. You are relegated to portraying only the surface of things, *Maya*, the *Great Illusion*, which is something that a photograph can do better than any artist. You are relegated to producing *kitsch* instead of true art. You may work for a lifetime and produce prodigious amounts of shopping mall art, but with nary a scintilla of true art in a truckload of paintings. Where does true art come from then, if not from the brush of a painter?

[page 31] But true art must be created out of the spiritual. There is no other solution. As soon as we touch upon the problem of man, any perception of the Great Illusion has no answer to life's problems, to the problem of man's destiny. If we are to return to the fountain-head of art and artistic creativity we must recover insight into the spiritual world.

One of the greatest novelists of the 20th Century, Ayn Rand, understood this spiritual aspect of true art, and wrote about it in her book, *The Fountainhead*. The art that she dealt with was architecture, and her artist was an architect, Howard Roark, who found his vision of architecture and stayed true to that vision in face of scorn and ridicule from the *kitsch* purveyors. He chose at one point in the story to work in a marble quarry rather than kowtow to the Neo-classical fascists of the architectural establishment of his time. Roark knew that their copycat designs, their *kitsch* architectural monstrosities, offered no answers for the skyscraper construction problems of the real world. His quest for recognition mirrors that of most great artists as they swim against the raging *kitsch current* of their time.

In ancient Chaldea, humans could distinguish two distinct states of being corresponding to our waking and sleeping life, but with a dramatic difference that has since passed away with our evolution of consciousness. They called their waking life "Apsu" and their sleeping life "Tiamat." They knew that when they were in Tiamat they were closer to the truth and reality of the world than when they were amongst the minerals, plants, and animals of their waking world of Apsu. When demons appeared in Tiamat and began to grow stronger, a countervailing force, a powerful being called Ea appeared. One only has to say that diphthong vowel sound aloud to experience the forceful nature inherent in it.

[page 34] Ea implies approximately abstract wisdom, wisdom that permeates all things. Soph is a particle that suggests (approximately) a state of being. Sophia, Sophea, Sopheia, the all-pervading, omnipresent wisdom sent to mankind her son, then known as Marduk, later called Micha-el, the Micha-el who is invested with authority from the hierarchy of the Angels.

These demons had the appearance of horses with human heads or lions with angels heads and these collectively formed the forces of the mighty Tiamat against whom Micha-el fought his mighty battle. He commanded the storm wind to his aid and attacked the dragon-being of Tiamat. Here is Steiner

description of the great battle.

[page 35] And this dragon-being, breathing fire and fury, advanced upon Marduk. Micha-el first smote him with various weapons and then drove the whole force of his storm-wind into the dragon's entrails so that Tiamat burst asunder and was scattered abroad. And so Marduk-Micha-el was able to create out of him the Heavens above and the Earth beneath. Thus arose the Above and the Below.

This was not a myth, but a reality to an Initiate who studied the Mysteries. He heard a voice telling him, "O man, you lift your eyes to the stars, you will see one part of that which Marduk-Micha-el formed in the Heavens out of the fearful abyss of Tiamat for the benefit of mankind. And if you look below, where the plants grow out of the mineralized Earth, where minerals begin to take form, you will find the other part which the son of Ea, wisdom, has recreated for the benefit of mankind." [paraphrased and quoted from page 35] Over time things have changed.

[page 37] We are now living in an epoch that ignores the spiritual, even as the phenomenal world was ignored by those to whom the spiritual was self-evident. We have to anticipate the time when we shall again be in a position to accept side by side with the teachings of the astronomers, astrophysicists, zoologists and botanists a knowledge of spiritual realities derived from spiritual insights. This epoch is now imminent and we must be ready to meet it if we are to accomplish our task and rediscover amongst other things the religious source of art and the art of healing.

We are so familiar with the insertion of an intercalary day every four years to keep our calendar aligned with the Sun that we never think that there might be other, equally valid ways of inserting an intercalary period to keep the calendar straight. The ancient Chaldeans had such a scheme. They had 12 months of 30 day long months in their calendar and every seventh year, they inserted an intercalary month to keep the calendar straight. To understand why they used such a calendar requires a peek into the spiritual world of the Chaldeans which Steiner is eminently capable of doing for us.

[page 43] They observed in themselves periodic changes in development every six or seven years⁽²⁾. This was in accordance with the lunar phases. The Moon phases of twenty-eight days corresponded with the pattern of their own life experiences of period of six or seven years. And they felt that a Moon phase of one month was equivalent, in the life of man, to a period of twenty-eight years (4X7 years). This they expressed in the calendar by inserting an intercalary month every seventh year. In brief, their calculations were based on the Moon, not the Sun.

On a daily basis we go through the three phases of waking, sleeping, and dreaming. The ancient Chaldeans went through these same phase only once during their lifetime. As a child, they dreamed in a state similar to our own dream state — only much more active — what would be considered pathological today because it drove their children to action. Here is a summary of the Chaldean's three states of waking, sleeping, and dreaming.

[page 44] A Chaldean did not experience these three conditions from day to day; he experienced a diminished condition of consciousness up to his twentieth year, then a consciously waking condition up to his fiftieth year, then a condition where it was said of him: he is taking his earthly consciousness into the spiritual world. He has arrived at the stage where he knows much more, is wiser than other people. Those advanced in years were looked up to as sages; today they are considered to be in their dotage.

If we can see into the spiritual world bordering on this one, we will see a lion-soul to which each individual lion is connected like a ball on a string to the lion-soul. When we have raised ourselves to this

spiritual world we see this new nature of reality. This sphere is called "Higher Astral" and can be seen in this [table](#) to be the 5th Condition of Form of the present Mineral Kingdom. [Steiner uses simply "astral" in these lectures to refer to this world.]

[page 51, 52] We enter a new world and we say to ourselves: we too belong to this other world, but we drag it down to Earth. The animal leaves something of itself behind, its group-soul or species-soul; on Earth we see only the quadruped. We drag down to Earth what the animal leaves behind in the spiritual world and acquire in consequence a different bodily form.

This different bodily form is our erect posture which is a consequence of our having an individual group-soul or immortal spirit being, our "I am". Each human being possesses a local, embedded spirit-soul while animals have only a non-local species-soul that they share with other members of their species. No one who has directly viewed this spiritual reality could ever give credence to a theory of evolution that has human beings descending from animals. Rightly understood, humans existed in a similar state during the Moon epoch of evolution that animals do now during the Earth epoch of evolution. The animals we see today can be considered to be humans that never evolved into human form by the close of the Moon epoch. Seen in the light of spiritual reality, humans are not advanced animals, but rather animals are retarded humans.

There is another higher world in which the souls of plants reside. In this "real spiritual world" the plants we see here on Earth are but the reflected image of the stars that fill the sky above us. Our "I am" which resides locally in each of us resides in this higher sphere for the plant kingdom. This sphere is called "Lower Devachan" and can be seen in this [table](#) to be the 6th Condition of Form of the present Mineral Kingdom.

[page 55] The stars are the dewdrops of this cosmic world and the plants are its reflected image. Their appearance is not their reality; in their manifestation here on Earth they are not even an entity, but, in relation to the endlessly manifold richness of that world of transcendence from whence shine forth the separate stars like dewdrops, simply a reflected image.

And now we discover that, as human beings, we bear within us that which is the real being of the plants in the higher spheres. We bring down into this mirrored life what the plants leave behind in the world of spirit, for the plant-beings live in that world and send down to Earth their reflected images and the Earth fills them with earthly substance.

We humans participate in three worlds here on Earth: the physical world where animals have no "I am" or self-consciousness, the Higher Astral world where the self-consciousness of animals exists, and Lower Devachan where the self-consciousness of plants exists.

[page 55, 56] And now we can say: a being who possesses body, soul, and spirit here on Earth is a human being. A being with body and soul here on Earth, but whose spirit dwells in a second world bordering on the physical world [RJM: Higher Astral] and which for that reason has less reality, is an animal. A being with only a body in the physical world, the soul in the second world and the spirit in the third world [RJM: Lower Devachan], so that the body is only a reflected image of the spirit and is filled out with terrestrial matter, is a plant.

Anyone who has seen the movie of Antoine de St. Exupéry's *The Little Prince* cannot help but to be moved to the soul by the final scene in which the stars over the desert are laughing. Rightly understood, this scene activates a deep sense of the nature of the plant world that we as humans have residing within us. As human beings we sense the deep meaning of that feeling, and we pity the poor materialistic scientists who consider that feeling to be nothing but a stew of glandular juices in a deluded human being. Rightly understood, these so-called scientists are projecting their own delusions onto the rest of humanity,

up until now.

[page 56] . . . we know that man bears these three worlds within himself. We feel to some extent the plants reaching up to the stars. As we look at the plants we say to ourselves: here is a being which manifests only its reflected image on Earth, an image detached from its true reality. The more we direct our gaze to the stars at night, the more do we see its true being in the higher worlds. When we look from Earth to Heaven and perceive the Cosmos to be one with the Earth, then we see the world of nature as a totality.

As we have followed Steiner into his description of the spiritual world of Higher Astral where the self-consciousness of animals reside as group-souls, we entered with him the [stage of knowledge](#) he calls Imagination. In the next world of Lower Devachan, we followed him in the next stage of knowledge called Inspiration into the world where plants have self-consciousness. In the next world of Higher Devachan, we follow him into the stage of knowledge called Intuition where the minerals have self-consciousness.

[page 59] If, after entering into this realm that is so differently constituted, where the Cosmos no longer appears bright with stars but is the abode of spiritual beings, this power of love fills our heart and soul, if, after embarking, so to speak, on the spiritual ocean of the universe, we can preserve our spiritual, psychic and physical identity and extend the infinite power of love and devotion to all beings, then we progressively perfect our insight and understanding.

Contacting the world of crystals, minerals, and metals is a daunting task because at one point we become suspended over a void where the Earth was formerly and our past and future sins act as a weight that threatens to plunge us into this abyss. [paraphrased from pages 62, 63] We must strive at this point to find our center of gravity in our "I am" that resides within ourselves.

[page 63] Never in the whole course of life do we need more confidence, more moral courage than at the moment when, confronted with the crystal world, the leaden weight of egotism -- and egotism is always a sin -- weighs upon the soul. That transparent void over which we are suspended now holds a terrible warning for us. If we stand firm and remain self-reliant, we can say: a spark of the divine is within me; I cannot perish, for I partake of the divine essence. If this becomes a concrete experience and not mere theoretical belief, then we have the courage to be self-sufficient, to stand on our own feet. We are now ready and determined to press on further.

As Steiner proceeds further he takes us to the various realms of the metals, the cosmic regions associated with them, and the parts of the body affected most by them. I have summarized these below, but a careful reading of the entire chapter is required to appreciate the meaning of this table.

| | | |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| Earth | Gold | Heart |
| Mars | Iron | Larynx |
| Jupiter | Tin | Eyes |
| Saturn | Lead | Head |

[page 74] The secret of spiritual investigation is that through transmutation of his consciousness man transforms himself. We cannot penetrate into other worlds by adopting the orthodox methods of research and investigation; we must undergo metamorphosis, transform our consciousness into new and different forms.

It should be clear that one reason materialistic science will never discover the spiritual world is because if one of its scientists were to transform himself, the rest of the scientists would not believe his reports. How can I make this claim? Well, Rudolf Steiner was first and foremost a scientist trained in their methods and

few so-called scientists believe his reports for the very good reason that the scientists themselves have not transformed their consciousness to verify the truth of Steiner's reports.

Dante's *Divine Comedy* begins with the following words, "Midway upon the journey of our life I found myself in a dark wood, where the right way was lost." The footnote tells us that, "Dante was 35 years old. The dark wood is the forest of the world of sense." In the summary of lecture 11 of this book we read, "The physical and etheric bodies increase in vitality up to the age of thirty-five, whilst the astral body and Ego decline. After thirty-five the process is reversed." Dante apparently had a clear understanding of what the midpoint of life was. He was lost in the sensory perceptible world and was about to enter the spiritual world on his journey. In lecture 4, Steiner points to an episode in the life of Brunetto Latini, Dante's teacher, which undoubtedly to my mind acted as an inspiration to Dante for his *Divine Comedy*. Latini suffered a heat stroke and an alteration of consciousness that led him to encounter the Goddess Natura [which we call Mother Nature]. For someone like Dante or Latini who was lost in the sensory world, an encounter with the Goddess Natura is a sure way to see the spiritual reality that transcends the material sensory world.

[page 85] He gives a graphic description, imaginatively inspired, of how, on his homeward journey to his native Florence, he came upon a hill in the midst of a desolate forest and on this hill he saw the Goddess Natura weaving at her loom. She revealed to him the significance of thinking, feeling and willing for the human soul, the intrinsic nature of the four temperaments and the function of the five senses.

[page 98] He realized that his sense organs were a gift from this other world, that his senses would be wholly undeveloped if this intermediate world did not permeate the world of sense experience.

Steiner says on page 87, "Could we but experience again the clairvoyant sleep of the ancients, we should know the Goddess Natura." This is not some illusory or mythic fabrication of a long, lost time, but a direct report from those with a different form of daily experience than ours about a reality that exists at our doorstep, the Goddess Natura, the real Mother Nature, if we could but raise our eyes to see through the fog of the sensory world that obscures her to our vision. The ancients could see both her visible and hidden aspects created the story of Persphone who wove the garment that which when we see it with our normal vision we call the sensory world, the only world most of us know, up until now. (details on page 91)

To sum up the human being, we can say that we are able to see our physical body on Earth with our normal senses of sight, our etheric body can only be seen by attaining a higher perception known as Imagination, our astral body requires Inspiration, and our Ego body or I requires Intuition. And yet, the capabilities of our Inspiration depends upon how old we are, as its capabilities vary with our age, i. e., our "life periods become differentiated organs of cognition." (page 124)

[page 130, 131] Thus you will realize that man is in fact a microcosm. He is related to those things that he never perceives in normal consciousness. But he would be unable to fashion, or to order his life, if the Moon forces were not active within him from birth to his seventh year. He perceives later on the nature of their influence. He would not be able to re-create his experiences between the ages of seven and fourteen if the Mercury mysteries were not active within him; nor would he be able to re-create this experiences of the years between fourteen and twenty-one -- the period when powerful creative forces pour into him, if he is karmically predisposed to receive them -- if he were not inwardly related to the Venus sphere. And if he were not united with the Sun sphere, he would not be able to develop ripe understanding and experience of the world between the ages of twenty and forty-two, the period when we pass from early manhood to maturity.

In previous reviews of *Nutrition* and *Bees*, we discovered that poisons in the plant world have a nature of astrality about them that should be reserved for the animal world. Plants that develop poisons are trying to act like animals, something that will be good for them to do in the epoch following Earth epoch, but as any good out of its time, that something becomes a evil, a harmful poison, in our time. Steiner looks at the deadly nightshade *Belladonna* and the harmless violet and compares them.

[page 153] The *Belladonna* develops its bell-shaped flowers inside which the fruit is formed and the astral element penetrates into the fruit. The violet develops its capsule only in the etheric element. The fruit of the deadly nightshade assimilates the astral element and in consequence the plant is poisonous.

This is most interesting. We find that our astral body is the bearer of forces which prove to be poisonous when assimilated by plants. This is how we must think of poison. We can only acquire an inner understanding of poison when we realize that man's astral body contains in effect the forces of all existing toxins, for they are an integral part of his being.

We might say that the violet is on a true path, but the deadly nightshade is on a false path. This will become important as we enter the study of "true and false paths in spiritual investigation" as the title of this enbooked series of lectures promises. How are we to understand the latest varieties of mediums, the so-called "channels" -- such as Lazaris, Ramtha, and Seth that were so popular in the last quarter of the 20th Century? Once more we find a "good out of its time."

[page 156, 157] And when a medium is in a trance condition, when the brain is insulated, an entity of this kind which is subject to Ahrimanic influences and whose function is to transmit the achievements of civilization to the future, slips into the brain. Instead of being the carrier of the human Ego, such a medium is, temporarily, the vehicle of an elementary being which is neglecting its duty in the Cosmos.

Thus they slip into it [the part of brain vacated by the medium's Ego] and introduce into the contemporary world what their observation has taught them of the art of writing. Thus, with the help of mediums they project into the present that which, in accordance with their mission, they ought to communicate to the future. Mediumism depends upon the fact that what is to become future capacities is already developed in the present in a vague and chaotic manner.

The beings who take possession of channels are slackers, skipping out on their real duties, and getting caught up the world of the present. Steiner tells us that in the typical séance, someone with clairvoyant vision will see the group surrounded by poisonous plants with fruits and flowers from which demoniac beings emerge. (page 162) This reminds me of the phrase from Matt 7:16, 20 "Therefore by their fruits ye will know them."

When is a human being apt to become a medium or a channel? When somehow their consciousness becomes dimmed. Our brain weighs about 1,500 grams, but floats in a liquid medium so that its effective weight is about 20 grams. In this small portion of the brain, the Ego resides. If it were to vacate that portion of the brain, an elemental being can slip in and take possession of the brain.

[page 167, 168] And fundamentally this danger is always present whenever the consciousness of man, i. e., his full Ego-consciousness, is suppressed, whenever he is in a stupefied, comatose condition or has actually suffered syncope [RJM: fainted]. Whenever man's consciousness is damped down, not through sleep, but through some other factor, there is the danger that man will be exposed to the world of elementary beings.

From the above we get the distinct impression that someone who attends séances, who consults mediums, or studies the writings of channels, is not on the true path, but rather the false path in spiritual

investigation.

In the closing lecture, Steiner answers a question that many of his readers must ask at some time in their studies of his work: "What is the use of all these descriptions of the spiritual world if I cannot look into that world myself?"

[page 205, 206] It is not true to say that one cannot acquire an insight into anthroposophical teachings and an understanding of them unless one can investigate the spiritual world oneself. It is essential to distinguish, especially at the present time, between the actual discovery of facts relating to the different worlds and the comprehension of facts.

The Ego "when it looks outward, knows waking (day) consciousness, dream consciousness and sleep consciousness."

[page 207] When it looks inwards, it knows clear intellectual consciousness; a sentient consciousness, a sentient life, though this is far more opaque and dreamlike than one usually imagines; and finally the dim, twilight will-consciousness that resembles the state of deep sleep.

As our Ego looks inward, it finds in this order: intellectual, sentient, and will consciousness. The order corresponds to the progression of the astral, etheric, and physical bodies that with the Ego comprise the four bodies of the human being. In addition, as we look backwards in time from the present Consciousness Soul Age we have lived in since 1453 A. D., we encounter the Intellectual Soul Age, and then the Sentient Soul Age. All of these things are interconnected and to know one allows you to know the others and make some sense of them. To summarize: our clear thinking is waking day-consciousness, our life of feeling is our dream consciousness, and our will consciousness is our deep sleep consciousness.

The methods of science today will never offer humankind a glimpse of the spiritual world. Each new scientific theory seems to have pushed the spiritual world further and further away from what we consider as reality. Newton's theory was one of the most successful scientific theories of all time -- he was said by some of the best thinkers of his time to have uncovered the "mechanism of the universe." But [Newton](#) discovered gravity when he was a young man -- as he matured his interests went to spiritual matters when he researched and wrote, *Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*.

[page 210, 211] Newton laid the foundations of a theory of gravitation, i.e. of a conception of space which, by its very nature, excludes any possibility of a spiritual outlook. If the world were as Newton depicted it, it would be devoid of spirit. But no-one has the courage to admit it. One cannot imagine a divine-spiritual Presence that lives and moves and has its being in the Newtonian world.

But one can become aware how our physical and etheric bodies prosper and grow till we reach 35 and then decline thereafter, and how our astral and Ego bodies begin to grow from 35 onward. How the physical and etheric bodies blossom at birth while the astral and Ego drop in fully bloomed and decline until age 35 when the processes are reversed until death when the physical and the etheric die and the astral and Ego re-enter the spiritual world. Death is thus seen to be a mirror of birth.

[page 214] All this information which revealed by spiritual investigation can be grasped by ordinary consciousness as I indicated in the first part of today's lecture. At the same time one must be prepared to abandon the demands of ordinary consciousness for factual or scientific proof.

One may not be able to support one's body by a slender cord without its breaking, but if one weaves the cord into a hammock, one can be supported in comfort and safety. Anthroposophic or spiritual science truths are like that cord.

[page 215] Anthroposophical truths are like the stars which mutually support each other. People must be prepared to see the whole picture. And if they can do this by means of their normal understanding they will begin really to grasp anthroposophical ideas such as the inter-relationship of birth and death.

[page 217, 218] Thus you see how true paths lead into the spiritual world, to a knowledge of birth and death and of the relationship of the human organism to the Cosmos, to the recognition of evil and to knowledge of Christ, the Cosmic Man.

And, in this parting shot, given one month before Rudolf Steiner gave his last series of lectures, he adds his wishes for our success in finding our true paths to spiritual investigation:

[page 222] I should like to add, however, that I hope to have succeeded in awakening in your souls some recognition of anthroposophical truths; and that these truths will grow and multiply and fertilize ever wider fields of human life.

~~~~~ footnotes ~~~~~

1. Ordinary spiritualists, Steiner makes clear elsewhere, are those who apply the techniques of materialistic science to spiritual world investigations. This was a vogue at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and is uncommon today so far as I know. Anyway, it does not work is Steiner's very strong claim for various reasons he covers in detail elsewhere. This quote on page 26 may help clarify a bit: Steiner stated there, "If, however, investigation into the phenomenal world is usually fraught with illusion, then it is probable that the possibilities of illusion will be increased rather than diminished if the methods for investigating the phenomenal world are also applied to the spiritual world." [Return to text below footnote.](#)

2. To understand the significance of the long seventh year to the Chaldeans, it will help one to know that human beings mature in stages of seven years. The physical body matures during the period from birth to first teeth change. At the time of the seventh year of human life, one's body has replaced all the cells of one's mother's body with new cells. The "baby teeth" have to fall out to be replaced. At the next seventh mark, puberty sets in at age 14. At the next mark, 21, an adult with a fully developed "I am" is ready to strike out on one's own in the world. These are only the first three marks, but the pattern of change is visible at every seventh year. [Return to text below footnote.](#)

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